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Advancement of women: advancement of women

In-depth study on all forms of violence against women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report summarizes the mandate, preparatory process, content and recommendations of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women. It transmits the study to the General Assembly in an annex, issued as document A/61/122/Add.1.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/185, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on all forms of violence against women and, on the basis thereof, to submit a report, with the study as an annex, to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. The resolution called for the study to include action-oriented recommendations, for consideration by States, encompassing, inter alia, effective remedies and prevention and rehabilitation measures. The Assembly requested that the study should be conducted in close cooperation with all relevant bodies of the United Nations, as well as with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The resolution called for the solicitation of information, including on strategies, policies, programmes and best practices, from Member States and relevant non-governmental organizations. In its resolution 60/136, the Assembly extended the deadline for submission and in-depth consideration to the sixty-first session.

2. In recent years, the General Assembly has addressed various aspects of violence against women, requesting separate reports for several of them, usually on a biannual basis. These include traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls (resolution 56/128), domestic violence against women (resolution 58/147), crimes against women committed in the name of honour (resolution 59/165), trafficking in women and girls (resolution 59/166), elimination of all forms of violence against women (resolution 59/167), and violence against women migrant workers (resolution 60/139). The study also responds to mandates provided under these resolutions.

3. The present report transmits the study to the General Assembly for consideration and action.

II. Preparation of the study

4. An interim report summarizing the status of preparations for the study was submitted to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session (A/60/211). That report highlighted the context, value added, goals and scope of the study and gave an overview of ongoing and planned preparatory activities.

5. The study's preparatory process benefited from broad consultations with, and inputs by, many different stakeholders. It provided a unique opportunity for highlighting the continuing challenges in addressing all forms and manifestations of violence against women, for enhancing political commitment to prevent and address such violence, and for strengthening concerted action against such violence and increasing accountability at all levels, and by all stakeholders.

6. The study reflects the inputs and contributions of many actors. A total of 129 Member States included information on violence against women in their responses to the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1). Some 49 Member States provided additional information in response to a note verbale of March 2005. Many of the 150 reports submitted by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women between January 2000 and December 2005 included information on their efforts to prevent and address violence against women.

7. Entities of the United Nations system made important contributions, providing reports, studies and other documentation, collaborating in expert group meetings, and contributing to awareness-raising concerning the study. A workshop held in December 2005 prepared the ground for follow-up by the entities of the United Nations system to the study.

8. Steps were also taken to consult other international, as well as regional organizations, and bodies of the United Nations such as human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, in particular the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. Contact was maintained throughout the preparatory process with the Independent Expert for the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children and his secretariat.

9. A large number of non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society provided inputs and contributed to ongoing information exchange and awareness-raising. These and other resources are available on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/index.htm).

10. Briefings, consultations and panel discussions involving representatives of Member States, United Nations entities and civil society took place throughout the preparatory process. Consultative mechanisms involving experts and representatives from United Nations entities and civil society were established early in the process, and are expected to carry forward the momentum into the follow-up phase. Further details of these activities are available on the website of the Division.

11. Voluntary contributions were received from eight Member States to support preparation of the study.

III. Content of the study and its recommendations

12. The study gives an overview (chap. 1) of the emergence of violence against women as a public concern and responsibility. It discusses the context where such violence occurs and its causes (chap. 2), then proceeds to reviewing forms and manifestations, as well as consequences and costs of such violence (chap. 3). The study discusses the current status of data availability (chap. 4), the responsibilities of States (chap. 5), as well as promising practices for addressing violence against women (chap. 6).

13. Ending violence against women must become a local, national, regional and global priority. Detailed recommendations for action on violence against women have been developed in intergovernmental agreements and in reports, studies, and guidelines by different actors. Significant gaps remain in their effective implementation, however. The study's recommendations (chap. 7) aim at accelerating implementation and enhancing action to prevent and respond to violence against women.

14. The study proposes recommendations for six key areas for action at the national level, aimed at: securing gender equality and protecting women's human rights; exercising leadership to end violence against women; closing the gaps between international standards and national laws, policies and practices; strengthening the knowledge base on all forms of violence against women to inform policy and strategy development; building and sustaining strong multisectoral

strategies, coordinated nationally and locally; and allocating adequate resources and funding. Concrete recommendations are also directed at the international level, and address both the intergovernmental level and the United Nations system. They highlight in particular the role of the General Assembly in ensuring that meaningful follow-up and implementation is undertaken by different stakeholders. Together, these recommendations constitute a clear strategy for Member States and the United Nations system to make measurable progress in preventing and eliminating violence against women.

15. In transmitting it to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General commends the study, and in particular its recommendations, to all Member States for consideration and immediate action.